

INDIA TALKING POINTS



A MINIATURE encyclopedia of information in regard to India. Intended for pastors, Centenary workers and others who have use for a compact reference work from which may be quickly obtained significant facts for incorporation into missionary addresses.



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CAN FIND IT

I N D I A

Talking Points



This is indeed India; the land of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of palaces and hovels, the country of a hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods. The one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, would not give up that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe.—*Mark Twain.*



THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

India, about one-half as large as the United States, has three times as many people, 315,000,000.



These people are of many races and religions. There are a score of languages, each of which is spoken by ten to twenty million people. In addition there are several hundred dialects. In the order of numerical strength religiously they are: Hindus, Mohammedan, Buddhists, Animists, Christians, and many other cults.



Eighty per cent of the people are farmers, who live in little villages for protection. They scratch the top of the soil with antiquated wooden plows, and millions are always hungry in a rich land which will raise two crops a year.

The crops depend largely upon the monsoons, or rain-bringing winds. When these fail, the crops fail, and there is famine.

Modern methods of transportation and distribution and the irrigation schemes of the British government are doing much to lessen the danger of famine.

THE OLD RELIGIONS

India is essentially a religious land.

There are 66,000,000 Mohammedans in India, but India is the only country the Moslems ever conquered without converting, and the mass of the people are Hindus.

The Hindus have more than 30,000,000 gods. Devotees wear upon their foreheads distinctive "god marks" to show which of the deities they follow.

In India there are more than five million "holy men," or religious mendicants, who live entirely by begging.

Religion and the social order are inextricably mixed, for out of religion has grown caste, the governing principle of Hindu life.

Originally there were four castes, Brahmans or priests, warriors, merchants and servants.

Now castes have multiplied and divided until there are more than 3,000 castes and an infinity

of sub-castes whose members cannot eat together, drink together, or intermarry.



Below all castes are the 60,000,000 outcastes who have no religious privileges, are forbidden to enter the temples or to speak the name of God. Their touch or even their shadow is pollution to a caste man.



Caste restrictions and the desire for favorable family connections have led to the custom of early marriage. Half of the Hindu girls are married before they are fifteen, and hundreds of thousands before they are twelve.



The position of women is low. "There be many sects in India," says an ancient proverb, "but upon two main points they be all agreed—the sacredness of the cow and the depravity of woman."



SANITATION

The people of India know little of sanitation.



The most pious act of Hinduism is a pilgrimage to one of the sacred rivers where thousands of people crowd into the impure waters to bathe and drink.



Cholera and the plague have been regarded as inevitable and have killed thousands every year.



Ignorance and superstition make it hard for modern medicine to heal India. In one village, for instance, the Hindus died of the plague rather

than be inoculated, for the serum was made of the blood of cows, and the cow is sacred to Hindus.



Missionaries introduced modern medicine into India. The British government has done much to aid the work and has built many hospitals, but still half a million towns and villages are without an educated resident physician.



Women have had a large part in medical work in India, for they alone can reach the women secluded in the zenanas.



In 1870 there were no women physicians in the entire East, and many people regarded the idea of sending them as unpractical and dangerous. The first to go out was Dr. Clara Swain of the Methodist Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Now more women than men go to India as medical missionaries.



EDUCATION

India is a land of illiterates. Throughout the land only six persons out of a hundred can read.



The government is establishing many schools, but the task of educating India would require a million and a half teachers. Caste further complicates the school problem, for no caste man will teach outcaste children.



Native Christians have a higher percentage of literates than either Hindus or Mohammedans, but they are in danger of losing this distinction,

for the number of Christians is increasing faster than the number of mission schools, and Christian children are now growing up almost as ignorant as the children around them.

Our Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow was the first college for women in the East.

Methodism has 40,000 pupils in its 1,500 schools of all grades, but this does not begin to meet the need, for there are in India 60,000 Methodist children with no schools at all. To educate them would require 1,500 additional teachers.

MODERN CHANGES

Under modern conditions the old India of caste and superstition is changing.

When the Bombay street railway was projected, everyone predicted failure. "You can never get high caste people to ride. They are too afraid of pollution." But the railway advertised free rides for the first two weeks. Curiosity overcame caste, and everybody rode. Once they got the habit they have kept it up, and trains and street cars succeed in spite of caste.

Low caste men, who in the old days could not even draw water from the same well as the Brahmans, now daily sell them such modern products as crackers, patent medicine, ice and soda water.

The world war had a great influence in overcoming prejudice. Men found that they could cross the "black water" without displeasing the

gods, and from daily contact with Europeans they learned much. Nothing in Europe impressed one Sikh soldier as much as the cows. "Two buckets full of milk at a time," he said, "and it is rich and yellow and full of cream. We must have the same kind of cows in India."



THE MASS MOVEMENT

One of the most significant changes in modern India is the religious change.



People by the thousands are becoming dissatisfied with their old religions and are turning to Christianity in a great "mass movement."



Among the outcastes, where the Methodist Church does most of its work, whole villages are asking for baptism.



Last year 35,000 were taken into the church, but 150,000 others were refused admission because of the lack of Christian pastors and leaders.



Hindu reform societies are becoming alarmed over this movement toward Christianity and are promising the outcastes social and religious recognition if they will not give up Hinduism.



If the churches do not take advantage of their great opportunity in India, some other religion will, and the mass movement will be turned away from Christianity.



India is the "now or never land" for the church.

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